



Portrait of Jaume Pahissa,
by Ramon Casas (MNAC)

The illustrator and painter Jaume Pahissa i Laporta (Barcelona, 1846-1928)

Jaume Pahissa i Laporta was born in the barcelonian borough of Sants-Montjuïc. His father, master carpenter, wanted to guide him, since his childhood, in the knowledge of architectural construction through an acquaintance of his, the architect Francesc Soler.

But Pahissa got orphan at the early age of ten, and became tutored by his uncle, the teacher Francesc Laporta, who supported his artistic vocation, in general, and his skills as a drawer of the natural in particular. He left school soon, and devoted himself fully to drawing. The forests and villages that then surrounded the city of Barcelona became the main source of inspiration in his youth.

In this formative years he made friendship with the landscape painter Baldomer Galofre, who at the time was also a resident in Sants, and the great painter Ramón Martí i Alsina had knowledge of his artistic skills through a common friend known as *Sivillà* –painter

and disciple of that-, welcoming him into his workshop, to which Pahissa went occasionally to receive his advices and instructions. Catalan painters as Vayreda, Armet, Torrecassana and himself constituted a nucleus akin to the pictorial Realism of Martí i Alsina, but Pahissa developed himself much better in landscapes with coal and pen than with oil painting, at least during those first years as an artist, the basic techniques with which he seemed to be more comfortable, and in which he specialized with great success.



Illustration for *Lo beneit i la porqueirola*, by Jaume Pahissa
La Il·lustració Catalana, (Barcelona, 1888)

Pahissa took part in several collective exhibitions in Barcelona, such as the organized by the known as *Society for Art Exhibitions* of Barcelona (1868), and at art galleries like the *Sala Parés* (1884, 1891, 1925), *La Pinacoteca* (1927) or the *Galeries Laietanes* (1928).

He also presented work at the *Barcelona's Fine Arts* competitions of 1891 -in which he won an honorary diploma-, in 1894, and in those of *Fine Arts and Artistic Industries* of 1896, 1898 and 1907.

Other exhibitions in which he was present were at the *Exposició Regional Olotina de Belles Arts i Industries Artístiques* (1900), at the *Exposició de la Lliga Regionalista* (1906), and at the *VI International Art Exhibition* of Barcelona (1911), and out of Catalunya took part at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris (1900), where he presented the drawing *Environs de Ginestar (Catalogne)*.

Among his individual exhibitions we can highlight the charcoal drawings one in the *Sala Parés* (1909), another in the *Galeries Laietanes* (1916), and the posthumous of paintings, drawings and sketches that the *Galeria Areñas* dedicated to him after his death (1928).

In his last years he was also present at the *Exposició d'Art* (1923), and at the exhibition of the department store *El Siglo* (in the known as *Salons of Fine Arts*) of 1924, both in the Catalan capital.



Universal Exhibition of Barcelona, Entrance to the park through the Hall of Sant Joan and coffee-restaurant view, by Jaume Pahissa, *La Hormiga de Oro* (Barcelona, 1888)

But Pahissa not only limited himself to making landscapes, revealing himself as a great figure artist, portraitist and caricaturist. The pencil drawing *Guifré el Pilós* (c.1900), is a remarkable example of an 19th century medieval inspired portrait -maybe a theatrical figure design- as well as of Pahissa's technical mastery when dealing with the human figure.



Portrait of Apel·les Mestres, by Thomas Pijoliu (pseud. of Jaume Pahissa; wood engraving by Josep Thomas), *La Il·lustració Catalana* (Barcelona, 1893)

He also made industrial drawings for commercial companies, some advertising designs, and popular illustration like the known as *auques*, kind of serial illustrated stories in one page, such as the *Auca de la Historia de las ferias y fiestas de la Merced*, or the *Auca de Genoveva de Brabante*.

Many of his designs and drawings were engraved and published in magazines such as *La Il·lustració Catalana*, for which he worked between 1880 and 1920, among we can highlight the allegories of the seasons, or the portraits he signed under the pseudonym of Thomàs Pijoliu.

He also made drawings for the almanacs of *L'Esquella de la Torratxa*, *La Il·lustración Ibérica*, *La Il·lustración Artística*, *Iris*, *La*

Rambla, between others, and took part in a handful of satirical magazines such as *El Loro* (1879-1885), where he signed as JP Laporta, *La Bomba* (1875-1881), where he worked as a political cartoonist, *La Mosca* (1881-1883), and *La Tomasa* (1891), where he illustrated a well known allegory of the 19th century.



Portrait of Narcís Oller, by Thomas Pijoliu (pseud. of Jaume Pahissa; wood engraving by Josep Thomas), *La Il·lustració Catalana* (Barcelona, 1891)

As a literary illustrator, his name appears in the book *Antonio Viladomat, the forgotten artist...*, written by Joaquim Fontanals (1877), and made a mythological composition for the edition of the *Oda a Barcelona*, by the poet Jacint Verdaguer (1883).

He illustrated with different landscapes the book *Historia del Ampurdán* (1883) by the historian Josep Pella i Forgas. For the book *Mallorca Cristiana* (1886), by Damas Calvet, he draw the portrait of the author, and that same year he illustrated with three plates *Tres Englantines*, a poem's book by Ramon Picó. He also made the cover for *Los espíritus de las tinieblas* by Juan José Franco (1888).

Are also noteworthy his works in *Segon llibre de faulas* (1892) by Felip Jacint Sala,

edited by *La Il·lustració Catalana*, and in *Croquis Pirenencs*, by Jaume Massó (1896), a major work of literary Modernism. Together with A. Serriñá, Pahissa took part in an edition of *Don Quixote de la Mancha* de Cervantes (1897), the drawings of which were used for another strictly graphic edition (1916). His vision of *Don Quixote*, greatly influenced by the work of Gustave Doré, will also be reproduced in successful collectible trading cards.

Pahissa also illustrated the poetry book *Nature*, written by the same Massó (1898), as well as some novels written by his friend Teodor Baró, and made a portrait of Verdaguer for the frontispiece of a portuguese edition of *L'Atlàntida* (1909). Towards 1910 made *Manon Lescaut's* drawings for an unpublished edition.



An idyll, by Jaume Pahissa (wood engraving by Josep Thomas), *La Il·lustració Catalana* (Barcelona, 1883)

Along with Josep Thomas, who engraved lots of Pahissa's drawings for *La Il·lustració Catalana*, his friend Ramon Ribas engraved some of his drawings too; with him he took part between 1911 and 1915 in the magazine *Bibliofília* -directed by Ramon Miquel i Planas- with a series of portraits of personalities, such as Angel Guimerà, Joan Maragall, Pompeu Gener, Santiago Rusiñol, among many others.

One of his last works in literary illustration was in the compilation *Contes de bibliòfil* (1924), illustrating the tale *Tresor d'una novela*, written by the critic of art Raimon Casellas, with the drawing of an old dark forest.



Demolition of the headquarters of the Ciutadella, by Jaume Pahissa (wood engraving by Josep Thomas), *La Il·lustració Catalana* (Barcelona, 1888)

In the last years of his life he broadened his artistic horizons and became a recognized and notorious landscape painter in oil. Much of his paintings from 1910 to 1927 could be seen in the aforementioned posthumous exhibition of 1928.

He also painted the images of saints for the chapel of the *Hospital Clinic* of Barcelona, as well like the portraits of some reputed M. D. of that time for the *Faculty of Medicine* of Barcelona, works without a precise dating.

In pencil and charcoal landscapes, above all, Pahissa shows a great talent to exploit the possibilities of the technique, with a great use of *chiaroscuro*, a good command

in the expression of atmospheric effects, as well as a kind of careful representation of the details, in the realist master line appointed by Martí i Alsina and others, maintaining certain notes of the romantic landscape that preceded him, especially echoes of the works of Lluís Rigalt i Farriols, all of it translated with mastery by the wood engravers.



Afternoon's falling, by Jaume Pahissa (wood engraving by Josep Thomas), *La Il·lustració Catalana* (Barcelona, 1882)

In this way, he drew diverse catalan landscapes, idyllic rural scenes, with a preference for representing old trees twisted by the time. Although, in his last years, he did not draw or paint landscapes taken from the natural; he had enough experience and imagination to recreate exquisite forestry landscape fantasies.

Xavier Soler Àvila
Art Historian (UB)

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SELECTED ARTWORKS OF PAHISSA:

DRAWINGS: *Portrait of Mossen Cinto Verdaguer*, 1877; *Caricature of a man with a hat and cane rubbing his nose*, c. 1880; *Portrait of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, 1894; *Rubi's Creek*, 1894; *Oak trees*, 1894; *View of Calders*, 1894; *Guifré el Pilós*, c. 1900; *Environs de Ginestar (Catalogne)*, 1900; *Forest inside*, 1907; *Calders*, c. 1910; *Oak trees*, c. 1910; *The Mountain*, 1911; *The Coast*, 1911; *Rubi's Creek*, c. 1920; *Llobregat's shore*, c. 1920; *Environs de Terrassa*, c. 1920; *The wood cutter*, s.a.; *The storm*, s.a.; *Mediterranean coast*, s.a.; *Sunrise*, s.a.; *The Fall*, s.a.; *The Oxer*, s.a.; *The Rainbow*, s.a.; *El Mogent*, s.a.; *Waterfall*, s.a.; *Pla del Vallès*, s.a.; *Portrait of Communion*, s.a.

LITERARY & POPULAR ILLUSTRATION: *Mythological composition*, *Oda a Barcelona*, 1883; *Portrait of Damas Calvet*, In: *Mallorca Cristiana*, 1886; *Englantines*, In: *Tres Englantines*, 1886; *Book cover of Los espíritus de las tinieblas*, 1888; *Allegory of the 19th century*, In: *La Tomasa*, 1891; *Second booklet of fables*, 1892; *Landscapes from Pyrenees*, In: *Croquis Pirenencs*, 1896; *Drawings for Don Quijote de la Mancha of Cervantes*, 1897; *Nature*, 1898; *Portrait of Verdaguer*, In: *L'Atlantida*, 1909; *Drawings for Manon Lescaut* (unpublished), c. 1910; *Portraits of Felip Pedrell*, *Josep Pin i Soler*, *Enric Prat de la Riba*, *Joaquim Ruyra*, *Joaquim Miret i Sans*, [et. al.], In: *Bibliofília*, 1911-1915; *Landscape, Treasure from a Novel*, In: *Contes de Bibliófil*, 1924; *'Auca de la Historia de las ferias y fiestas de la Merced'*, s.a.; *'Auca de Genoveva de Brabante'*, s. a.

OIL PAINTINGS: *The tiny shepherd*, 1883; *Images of Saint Gil, Saint Rose, Saint Blas and Saint Luke*, *Hospital Clínic*, Barcelona, c. 1900; *Into the forest*, 1907; *Portraits of the Doctors Giner i Partagàs, Pi i Sunyer, Robert, and Silóniz*, *Faculty of Medicine of Barcelona*, c. 1910; *El Termenal (Moià)*, 1910; *Puig Rodó*, 1913; *Foothills at the Montsec*, 1915; *Faraway Village*, 1917; *La Masia Fonda*, 1918; *Torrent Gornal*, 1919; *Our Land*, 1920; *The hermitage*, 1921; *La Garriga*, 1921; *Tosca's Road (Moià)*, 1922; *Cardedeu's Forest*, 1923; *The Sunset*, 1924; *Forest clearing*, 1925; *Rubi's Creek*, 1926; *Forest of Can Corbera (Rubi)*, 1927; *Santa Coloma de Cervelló*, 1927.

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Art Historian (UB)